**SUBJECT AND OBJECT IN ENGLISH**

First, let’s review the difference between a **subject**and an **object.**

The subject of a sentence is the person or thing that **performs the action:**

* **We** want some fruit juice.
* **Karen** likes Fred.
* **Smoking**causes cancer.
* **Daniel** made a sandwich.
* **The earthquake**damaged my house.
* **Jennifer** lied to Sam.

The object of a sentence is the person or thing that **is acted upon, or receives the action:**

* We want **some fruit juice.**
* Karen likes **Fred.**
* Smoking causes **cancer.**
* Daniel made **a sandwich.**
* The earthquake damaged **my house.**
* Jennifer lied to **Sam**.

**OBJECT QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH**

Most questions in English are **object questions**– we want to know about the receiver of the action. These questions follow the [QUASM formula](https://www.espressoenglish.net/an-easy-way-to-form-almost-any-question-in-english/" \t "_blank): **Qu**estion word – **A**uxiliary verb – **S**ubject – **M**ain verb.

For questions in the simple present, the auxiliary verbs are **do**and **does:**

* **What do**you want to drink?  
  We want **some fruit juice.**
* **Who does**Karen like?  
  Karen likes **Fred.**
* **What does**smoking cause?  
  Smoking causes **cancer.**

For questions in the simple past, the auxiliary verb is **did**:

* **What did**Daniel make?  
  Daniel made **a sandwich.**
* **What did** the earthquake damage?  
  The earthquake damaged **my house.**
* **Who** **did** Jennifer lie to?  
  Jennifer lied to **Sam.**

**SUBJECT QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH**

However, sometimes we want to ask about the **subject.**We *don’t know* the person or thing who performed the action, and we want to find out.

This type of question is called a **subject question,**and subject questions do NOT use the auxiliary verbs **do, does,**and **did.**

**How to form subject questions:**

* Who / What + verb in simple present or simple past + object ?

**Examples of subject questions in the simple present:**

* **Who** wants some fruit juice?  
  **We**want some fruit juice.
* **Who** likes Fred?  
  **Karen** likes Fred.
* **What** causes cancer?  
  **Smoking**causes cancer.

**Examples of subject questions in the simple past:**

* **Who** made a sandwich?  
  **Daniel**made a sandwich.
* **What** damaged your house?  
  **The earthquake**damaged my house.
* **Who** lied to Sam?  
  **Jennifer**lied to Sam.

**SUBJECT AND OBJECT QUESTIONS IN OTHER VERB TENSES**

In other verb tenses – present continuous, present perfect, etc. – the auxiliary verbs are forms of the verbs **be**and **have.**In these verb tenses, we still use the verbs **be**and **have**in both subject and object questions:

**Present continuous:**

* Subject Q: **Who** is washing the car?
* Object Q: **What** is Paul washing?
* Answer: **Paul** is washing **the car.**

**Past continuous:**

* Subject Q: **Who** was talking about the problem?
* Object Q: **What** was the manager talking about?
* Answer: **The manager** was talking about **the problem.**

**Present perfect:**

* Subject Q: **Who** has spent $1000 on a computer?
* Object Q: **How much** have your parents spent on a computer?
* Answer: **My parents** have spent **$1000** on a computer.

**Present perfect continuous:**

* Subject Q: **Who** has been working on this project?
* Object Q: **What** have you been working on?
* Answer: **I** have been working on **this project.**

**Future with WILL:**

* Subject Q: **What** will help the students?
* Object Q: **Who** will this book help?
* Answer: **This textbook** will help**the students.**

**Future with GOING TO:**

* Subject Q: **Who** is going to order dessert?
* Object Q: **What** are you going to order?
* Answer: **We**are going to order **dessert**.

**THE SIMPLEST RULE FOR SUBJECT/OBJECT QUESTIONS**

When you are going to ask a question in the **simple present**or **simple past**using **who**or **what,**ask yourself,

“Am I asking about the **doer** of the action or the **receiver** of the action?”

If you’re asking about the **doer/subject,**then DON’T use do/does/did:

* ~~Who~~**~~does~~**~~want fruit juice?~~  
  Who wants fruit juice?
* ~~What~~**~~did~~**~~damage your house?~~  
  What damaged your house?

If you’re asking about the **receiver/object,**then YES – use do/does/did:

* What **do**you want to drink?
* What **did**the earthquake damage?